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How to dispose of a mattress

Learn the best mattress disposal options

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Moving into a new place often comes with upgrades: new home, new appliances, new furniture. If your move includes a new mattress, you're faced with a unique challenge: How do you get rid of your old mattress? While you might have seen old mattresses casually tossed in a dumpster or lying on the side of a road, there are better options for disposing mattresses without adding to landfills. Since close to 20 million mattresses end up in landfills each year, and just one mattress can take up to 40 cubic feet in a landfill, it's important to find a responsible mattress disposal option.

The first thing to consider when disposing your mattress is its condition. If your mattress is relatively new and still in good shape, you might be able to sell or donate it so that it doesn't go to waste. If you've gotten all the use out of your mattress that it has to offer, you're probably better off recycling it. Up to 90 percent of your mattress can be broken down and recycled, so recycling is definitely a better option for the environment than tossing your mattress in the dumpster.



How to recycle a mattress

- **Call a local recycling center:** It might take a few phone calls, but you will likely find a recycling facility in your area that accepts whole mattresses. If you can't find one on your own, ask local universities for suggestions, since they frequently partner with recycling services that can handle large items like mattresses. The [Bye Bye Mattress database](#) can point you in the right direction.
- **DIY mattress recycling:** If you have the time and want to take a DIY approach, tear your mattress apart yourself and take the recyclable parts to your local recycling center. Here's what you can recycle:
 - Wood frame
 - Steel springs
 - Polyurethane foam
 - Outer foam

DIY recycling is more time-consuming than having somebody else take your mattress off your hands, but it's better for the environment than leaving it in a dumpster. (You may want to consult a DIY guide so you know how to dismantle your mattress efficiently.)

As an added bonus, you might be able to get some cash for parts, like the metal coils, that can be sold as scrap metal. You can also save the foam from your mattress to use as packing materials if you're planning a move.

- **Repurpose it:** If you're a DIYer, you might be happy to discover all the cool things you can make with materials from your old mattress. Use the springs to make fun outdoor art projects, wine racks or ornaments; the padding for a dog bed; the fabric for cushion covers and the thread for sewing projects.



How to donate a mattress

- **Donate to charity:** If your mattress is still in decent shape, it could benefit someone in need. Keep in mind that due to the prevalence of bed bugs, you might not be able to find a location that accepts mattress donations. Many charities refuse to sell donated mattresses, but they will accept mattresses to reuse, or they will recycle them for you. Call non-profit thrift stores and charities in your area to ask about their policies on accepting used mattress donations. Some charities, like GoodWill, do not accept any mattress donations, while others only accept mattresses in select locations. Here's are some charities to contact:
 - **Salvation Army:** The Salvation Army currently accepts mattresses.
 - **DonationTown.org:** This organization will help you find a charity near you who will accept your mattress donation. They currently can arrange for donation pick up in 30 cities across the United States.
 - **Furniture Bank Association:** This organization donates furniture items from individuals and businesses to families who are struggling financially. Check their website to find your nearest location.
- **Give it away:** If selling your mattress doesn't work, try advertising it for free. This won't get you any extra cash, but it could save you the hassle of tearing it apart yourself or paying someone to haul it away. Use the same methods for selling your mattress, only instead of listing a price, list it as free. You could also try a website like [Freecycle.org](https://www.freecycle.org), which connects community members with people who are giving things away in their area.



How to sell a mattress

- **Sell your mattress locally:** Before you consider this option, you should know that selling a mattress may be illegal in your state. Many states only allow you to sell a used mattress after you've cleaned it in a rigorous and specific way. Check with your state to find out its regulations. Because the department that handles bedding varies from state to state, you might have to contact your state departments of Health, Consumer Affairs, Agriculture or Licensing.

You aren't going to make enough money to justify shipping your used mattress across the country, so think local when you advertise. Anywhere that allows for an advertisement, such as a library, community center or locally-owned restaurant is a good place to start. When you're writing a sales ad, include details about the cleanliness of your mattress along with details about its history: Non-smoking house, no pets and a relatively recent purchase date are all major selling points.

- **Sell your mattress online:** Websites dedicated to consumer sales (like Cragislist and Facebook Marketplace) are the best place to start when you're trying to sell your mattress. You can also use your social network to advertise your mattress. Place an ad on all of your social networking sites, and encourage your friends to share your post.



How to haul away a mattress

computer rental or waste disposal service that will pick up and haul your mattress for you. Fees vary, and you'll have to do some extra work, like wrapping it tightly in plastic, if you suspect your old mattress has bed bugs. (The service you use will be able to provide you with exact instructions).

- **Haul away:** Many [mattress companies](#) will haul your old mattress away to recycle it when they deliver your new one. This is by far the easiest option since you won't really need to do anything other than pay a small fee for the labor involved in removing and hauling away your old mattress. Here are some things to know:
 - Generally, the fee is under \$30.
 - Some companies will haul your mattress away for free as an added incentive to have you purchase your new one from them.
 - Best for local moves.
 - Many online retailers don't offer this service.

Ask if haul away is an option before you buy your mattress. Most delivery services that offer mattress hauling do so by appointment, and some stores or mattress companies (especially those that sell online) don't offer this convenient service. If you're working with a store that doesn't offer to haul your old mattress away, you might want to shop around till you find one that does.

The trick here is to arrange for your new mattress to be delivered before you move. This option will work best for a local move, since you'll end up having to move your new mattress anyway. If you're moving far away, or just don't want to deal with the headache of transporting a brand new mattress, this isn't your best bet.



Bottom line

It's important to think about how you're going to get rid of your old mattress before your new one is delivered. Recycling, donating and selling your mattress are all options that will keep your old

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As a member of the ConsumerAffairs Research Team, Kate Williams, Ph.D. believes everyone deserves easy access to accurate and comprehensive information on products and businesses before they make a purchase. She spends countless hours researching companies and industries before writing buyers guides to make sure consumers have all the information they need to make smart, informed buying decisions.



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